

BURNED THEIR BOOKS.

How the Beef Trust People Prepared for Official Scrutiny.

METHODS OF THE MEAT BARONS.

Millionaire Packers and the Inconvenient Sherman Law.

THE LIFE ROMANCE OF A BIG MONOPOLY.

CHICAGO, March 16.—The Department of Justice at Washington is after the "big three." A thorough overhauling of the methods of the powerful meat combine is about to be begun and recent occurrences indicate that the combine is preparing things accordingly.

For years the combine has had its headquarters in Chicago. Its members are Armour & Co. of Chicago, the Armour Packing Company of Kansas City, the Cudahy Packing Company of Omaha, Nelson Morris and Co. of Chicago, and the house at St. Louis, and G. F. Swift & Co. of Chicago.

Until last May, G. F. Swift & Co. and Co., who slaughtered about 400,000 carcasses a week, was finally sold to an English syndicate. The sale was followed by internal dissensions and a consequent depreciation of its securities. Then it was thrown out of the combine, the members of which thought that it was powerless to harm them by its opposition.

In addition to the Hammond Company, whose output by reason of its troubles has been materially reduced, there is only one other dressed meat concern in the combine. It is the International Packing Company, of which T. E. Wells & Co. are the owners.

The combine has been in existence in five years. It has perfected its system so that at present it has complete control of the States of Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, the District of Columbia and all the New England States.

How the Business is Operated. A clearing house with offices in the Montauk Block in this city receives daily returns of the sales of each member of the combine and certifies to a certain percent of all the money paid in. The members pay 40 cents per 100 pounds of meat sold. At the end of each week the clearing house apportions the total payments among the members according to the percentage of their sales.

The clearing house is in the charge of William M. White, who sits up aloft in his obscure quarters, and with the aid of a couple of clerks deftly manipulates things so that the members of the combine know just where to expend a few dollars so that they will do the most good. In fact, he is the Secretary and Manager combined of this unique clearing house. Under his watchful care the books have been kept in the block in the name of W. M. White, however, knows him no longer. He has vanished and even his name has disappeared from the directory of the building. The only thing to indicate that he occupied quarters in the block is the name of W. M. White, which is the office door. No one would suspect that behind that modest door millionaires meet in solemn conclaves and decide the fate of some butcher in Olean, N. Y., or down in the rugged hills of Pennsylvania.

Last Saturday, by knowing persons, Secretary White began to put out of the way all memoranda and books showing the history of the combine and its doings, so that it might avoid annoyance in the investigation of the Federal department of justice. "The fact is," reports an investigator, "the books were burned."

Its Method of Procedure is Simple. The manager of the G. H. Hammond Company is now in London, and therefore could not be seen in regard to the connection of his company with the combine. Mr. Wells, the President of T. E. Wells & Co., was asked for an account of the workings of the trust and was free to explain how it had tried to keep his concern out of Eastern markets.

The method of procedure, according to the story of Mr. Wells, is simple. The cities and towns of the East and South are divided into certain classes. In a town of 10,000 or under the members of the combine will build a plant. In a city of 20,000 people two members of the combine may enter. In cities of 30,000 people or over three of the combine are privileged to enter and take the scale of the local market.

The line of scalps that dangles from the ceiling of the Montauk clearing house is an evidence of the discomfiture of the tenderfoot butchers of the East.

The gold has not been left entirely to the combine, however, for T. E. Wells & Co. have proved a thorn in the "Big Three's" sides. They would make quiet arrangements and sneak in a car or two of beef in cities preoccupied by the combine. Then they would appear the first competitor in the market. In some cases a drop of 3 cents was made to remind Mr. Wells that he was an interloper, and that if he wished to compete in the market he would have to be on a par with the big butchers it must be at a loss. These tactics have been systematically pursued. In two cities only, according to this President, have T. E. Wells & Co., been driven out—in Washington and in St. Louis. In the latter place a drop of 3 cents was made, but a subsequent rise in price made the combine whole again.

The Law Bearing on the Case. The Sherman act of July 2, 1890, which was "an act to protect trade commerce against unlawful restraints," provides that every contract in restraint of trade or of a trust or otherwise, or conspiracy in restraint of trade or commerce among the several States, is illegal, and every person or corporation entering into such a combination is guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be punished by a fine of \$5,000 or one year imprisonment, or both. Another section provides that every person who shall monopolize or attempt to monopolize, or combine or conspire with any other person or persons to monopolize any part of the trade or commerce among the several States or with foreign nations shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof, the property may be seized and forfeited the same any property so imported into the United States contrary to law.

Any person or corporation injured in business may recover damages to the amount of three times the extent of the injury. The act also provides that every person who shall monopolize or attempt to monopolize, or combine or conspire with any other person or persons to monopolize any part of the trade or commerce among the several States or with foreign nations shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof, the property may be seized and forfeited the same any property so imported into the United States contrary to law.

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With facilities to make use of every scrap of refuse, much of which is thrown away by the local butcher, the members of the combine have gradually absorbed the beef trade and fixed prices to suit themselves. When the combine has sold meat at a loss to crush competition its members have divided the loss. In some cases a troublesome butcher has been paid to close his establishment.

Meat Sellers Forced to Buy From Them. In others the leading meat sellers have been compelled by threat of opposition markets to buy from the combine. By one means or another the East and South have been covered by a network of coolers, and the "Big Three" have become the autocrats of the entire meat supply of those portions of the country. They control things in Philadelphia, New York, Rochester and New England. The few carcasses sent there

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IT WILL PAY YOU

to do so at once, and you will learn that the means which accomplished these wonderful things was that great discovery,

PAIN'S

CELERY

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It will pay you to investigate its wonderful qualities and great merit.

DO YOU COUGH

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